

The Mark of the Beast, Microchips, and Recent Hoaxes

<https://dustinmartyr.wordpress.com/2014/04/16/the-mark-of-the-beast-microchips-and-recent-hoaxes/>

[The Friendly Atheist](#) recently alerted me to a rather amusing hoax involving one of the Book of Revelation's most talked about subjects: the mark of the Beast. In short, there was an online joke which made the following statement:

On May 2014, through Europe newborn children will be compelled to take in a subcutaneous RFID chip.

Public clinics in the European Union are to be alerted. The chip in inquiry will be contributed with the report sheet on the newborn. This chip will also be an impressive GPS sensor that will task with a micro-disposable battery every 2 years in state clinics. GPS chip grants an edge of error of 5 meters, as a statement that it is excellent. It will be linked straight to a satellite, which will guide the networks. As forecasted, this chip will be essential for all kids born after May 2014, but with a present confirmation date until December 2016.

European newborn children are, according to the joke, mandated to take in a microchip which will be linked to a global satellite. This was likely to provoke a Christian backlash (which inevitably happened). Many cried foul play when it seemed that newborn children were being forced to be "marked" with the mark of the Beast.



I find this amusing for two reasons. First of all, it demonstrates that even an article promoting this joke containing the word "hoax" will still be taken seriously by fanatical readers. Secondly, it demonstrates that there is a huge muddle over what the Book of Revelation was attempting to convey with "the mark of the Beast" motif. I was able to work some with this theme during my research for my dissertation "Paradoxical Conquering in the Apocalypse of John" (which I recently successfully defended). I will take this opportunity to shed some light on the mark of the Beast in hopes of *encouraging* intelligent discourse on the matter (and to *discourage* fanatical panic rooted in ignorance).

The mark (χάρagma) of the Beast appears in seven passages in the Book of Revelation. Revelation 13:16-17 provides the first two occurrences,

And [the beast from the earth] causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a **mark** on their right hand or on their forehead, and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the **mark**, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.

This passage indicates that the Beast from the earth will encourage everyone to take upon themselves this mark. There will be potential financial restrictions for those who refuse this marking. We also learn that the mark is placed either on the forehead or on the hand. More information is gained in Rev. 14:9-11,

Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a **mark** on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the **mark** of his name."

This passage threatens those who both receive the mark and offer worship unto the Beast with severe images of punishment. We also note that the mark is again placed on the forehead and on the hand. Revelation 16:2 further discourages John's audience,

So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the **mark** of the beast and who worshiped his image.

Punishment is threatened on those who receive the mark and who offer up false worship. The Book of Revelation ensures its readers that the beasts will get what is coming to them (Rev. 19:20),

And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the **mark** of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.

The false prophet is the same character as the beast from the earth. We see that people are that tricked, lied to, and deceived into taking the mark of the Beast. False worship is again linked with this mark.

The final reference to the mark of the Beast occurs in Rev. 20:4,

Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given for them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, even those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the **mark** on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

This passage demonstrates that the Christian martyrs who remained loyal to the gospel, refused to offer false worship, and didn't take the mark will be vindicated and richly rewarded. The mark is again located on the forehead and on the hand.

These references to "marking" demonstrate, in some sense, a measure of religious allegiance. To be marked with the mark of the Beast entails worship offered unto him. Those who don't take this mark are characterized by their alternative allegiance to the testimony of Jesus and the word of God. With this in mind, let us examine the way in which the faithful are "marked" in the Book of Revelation:

The one who is conquering, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write **on him the name of My God**, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name. (Rev. 3:12)

Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and **the name of His Father written on their foreheads**. (Rev. 14:1)

they will see His face, and **His name will be on their foreheads**. (Rev 22:4)

Note that the faithful are characterized by having the name of *the true God*, the Father, written upon their foreheads. This would have the rhetorical effect of encouraging John's audience to stay loyal in their religious allegiance and to not compromise by participating in the imperial cult, local trade guilds, or even the pagan temples. We are aware of devotees to the Asclepius cult who wore a secret symbol to their deity. Point being, this sort of marking was a legitimate religious concern for John's audience.

I also want to note how the “marking of the forehead” is used throughout the Hebrew Bible as a sign of identifying religious allegiance:

-Aaron wore the high priest's turban upon his forehead during his sacred duties (Exod. 28:37-38).

-The Creed of Israel, the Shema, shall be bound to the hand and to the forehead (Deut. 6:4, 8).

-Uzziah the king was punished with leprosy upon his forehead for illicitly invading the temple's sacred space (2 Chron. 26:19-20).

-Isaiah the prophet condemns Israel for her stubbornness, which is described as having a “bronze forehead” (Isa. 48:4).

-Jeremiah speaks similarly by labeling Judah's stubbornness as a “harlot's forehead” (Jer. 3:3).

-Ezekiel is commanded by God to mark the forehead of those who lament the nation's abominations, which will in turn mark them out for deliverance (Ezek. 9:4-7).

In summary, the mark of the Beast is not a literal stamp (or microchip), but rather a sign of devotion and allegiance to false worship. The faithful in the Book of Revelation refuse to take this mark and instead take the mark of devotion to the one true God, the Father. The Book of Revelation discourages religious compromise and encourages fidelity unto God and unto the Lamb. So while the mark of the Beast had a legitimate application for John's Asian audience, it nevertheless continues to encourage readers today to avoid religious compromise and false systems of prostration which take away from that which is due to the true God.